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MR. QUINCY'S SECOND SPEECH,**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.****ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE****OF FOREIGN RELATIONS.****IN REPLY TO THE OBSERVATIONS OF MR. BACON.**DEC. 7. 1808.
.....**MR. SPEAKER:—**

I OFFER myself to the view of this house with very sensible embarrassment, in attempting to follow the honorable member from Tennessee (Mr. Campbell)—a gentleman, who holds so distinguished a station on this floor, through thy blessing, Mr. Speaker, on his talents and industry. I place myself, with much reluctance, in competition with this our great political Æneas—an illustrious leader of antiquity, whom in his present relations, and with his present projects, the gentleman from Tennessee not a little resembles. Since, in order to evade the ruin impending over our cities, taking my honorable colleague (Mr. Bacon) by one hand, and the honorable gentleman from Maryland (Mr. Montgomery) by the other, little Iulus and wife Creusa, he is posting away into the woods, with Father Anchises and all the household gods.

When I had the honor of addressing this house, a few days ago, I touched this famous report of our committee on foreign relations, perhaps, a little too carelessly; perhaps, I handled it a little too roughly, considering its tender age and the manifest delicacy of its constitution. But, sir, I had no idea of affecting very exquisitely the sensibilities of any gentleman. I thought that this was a common report of one of our ordinary committees, which I had a right to canvass, or to slight, to applaud, or to censure, without raising any extraordinary concern, either here or elsewhere. But from the general excitement, which my inconsiderate treatment of this subject occasions, I fear that I have been mistaken. This can be no mortal fabric, Mr. Speaker. *This must be that image which fell down from Jupiter—present, or future.* Surely, nothing but a being of celestial or igneous would raise such tumult in minds, attempered like those, which lead the destinies of this house.

Sir, I thought, that this report had been a common piece of wood—"Inutile lignum." Sir, just such a piece of wood, as any day labourer might have hewed out, in an hour. had he health and a hatchet. But it seems, that our honorable chairman of the committee of foreign relations, "*maluit esse Deum.*" Well, sir, I have no objections. If the workmen will, a God it shall be. I only wish, that when gentlemen bring their sacred things upon this floor, that they would "blow a trumpet before them, as the Heathens do." on such occasions, to the end, that all true believers may prepare themselves to adore and tremble, and that all unbelievers may turn aside, and not disturb their devotions.

I assure gentlemen, that I meant to commit no sacrilege. I had no intention, sir, of canvassing very strictly this report. I supposed that, when it had been published and circulated, it had answered all the purposes of its authors, and I felt no disposition to interfere with them.—But the house is my witness, that I am compelled, by the clamour raised, on all sides, by the friends of administration, to descend to particulars, and to examine it somewhat minutely.

My honorable colleague, (Mr. Bacon) was pleased the other day to assert :.....Sir, in referring to his observations on a former occasion, I beg the house not to imagine, that I am about to follow him.—No, sir, I will neither follow, nor imitate him. I hang upon no man's skirts. I run barking at no man's heel. I canvass principles and measures, solely, with a view to the great interests of my country. The idea of personal victory is lost, in the total absorption of sense and mind, in the importance of impending consequences—I say, he was pleased to assert, that I had dealt in general allegations, against this report, without pointing out any particular objection. And the honorable chairman (Mr. Campbell) has reiterated the charge. Both have treated this alleged omission, with no little asperity. Yet, sir, it is very remarkable, that so far from dealing in general allegations, I explicitly stated my objections. The alternatives presented by the report—war or suspension of our rights, and the recommendation of the latter, rather than take the risque of the former, I expressly censured. I went farther—I compared these alternatives with an extract from an address made by the first continental congress to the inhabitants of Great Britain, and attempted to shew, by way of contrast, what I thought, the disgraceful spirit of the report.—Yet these gentlemen complain, that I dealt in general allegations. Before I close, sir, they will have, I hope, no reason to repeat such objections. I trust, I shall be particular, to their content.

Before entering upon an examination of this report, it may be useful to recollect, how it originated.

By the 3d section of the 2d article of the constitution, it is declared, that the president of the United States "shall, from time to time, give to congress information of the state of the union, and *recommend to their consideration such measures* as he shall judge necessary and expedient." It is, then, the duty of the president to recommend such measures as in his

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judgment congress ought to adopt. A great crisis is impending over our country. It is a time of alarm and peril and distress. How has the president performed this constitutional duty? Why—After recapitulating, in a formal message, our dangers and his trials, he expresses his confidence that we shall “with an unerring regard to the essential rights and interests of the nation, weigh and compare the *painful alternatives*, out of which a choice is to be made,” and that “*the alternative chosen* will be maintained with fortitude and patriotism.” In this way our chief magistrate performs his duty. A storm is approaching—the captain calls his choice hands upon deck, leaves the rudder swinging, and sets the crew to scuffle about *alternatives*. This message, pregnant with non descript alternatives, is received by this house. And what do we? Why—Constitute a great committee of foreign relations, and lest they should not have their attention completely occupied by the pressing exigencies of those with France and Great-Britain, they are endowed with the whole mass; British, Spanish and French; Barbary powers and Indian neighbours. And what does this committee? Why—After seven day solemn conclave, they present to this house an illustrious report, loaded with *alternatives*—*nothing but alternatives*.—The cold meat of the palace is hashed and served up to us, piping hot, from our committee room.

In considering this report, I shall pay no attention to either its beginning, or its conclusion. The former consists of shavings from old documents, and the latter of bird lime for new converts. The twelfth page is the heart of this report. That I mean to convuls. And I do assert, that there is not one of all the principal positions, contained in it, which is true, in the sense, and to the extent, assumed by the committee. Let us examine each separately.

“Your committee can perceive no other alternative, but abject and degrading submission—war with both nations—or a continuance and enforcement of the present suspension of our commerce.” Here is a trifurcated alternative. Let us consider each branch, and see if either be true, in the sense assumed by the committee. The first, “abject and degrading submission,” takes two things for granted; that trading, pending the edicts of France and Great Britain, is submission; and next, that it is submission, in its nature, abject and degrading. Neither is true. It is not submission to trade, pending those edicts, because they do not command you to trade. They command you not to trade. When you refuse to trade you submit, not when you carry on that trade, as far as you can, which they prohibit. Again, it is not true that such trading is abject and disgraceful, and that too upon the principles avowed by the advocates of this report. Trading, while these edicts are suspended over our commerce is submission, say they, because, we have not physical force to resist the power of these belligerents; of course, if we trade, we must submit to these restrictions; not having power to evade, or break through them. Now, admit for the sake of argument, what however, in fact I deny, that the belligerents have the power to carry into effect their decrees, to per-

fectly, that by reason of the orders of Great Britain, we are physically disabled from going to France, and that by the edicts of France, we are, in like manner, disabled from going to Great Britain. If such be our case, in relation to these powers, the question is, whether submitting to exercise all the trade, which remains to us, notwithstanding the edicts, is "*abject and degrading*."

In the first place, I observe, that submission is not to beings constituted as we are always "*abject and degrading*." We submit to the decrees of providence—to the laws of our nature—absolute weakness submits to absolute power—and there is nothing in such submission, shameful, or degrading. It is no dishonour, for finite, not to contend with infinite. There is no loss of reputation, if creatures, such as men, perform not impossibilities. If, then, it be true, in the sense asserted, by some of the advocates of this report, that it is physically impossible for us to trade with France and Great Britain, and their dependencies, by reason of these edicts, still there is nothing "*abject or degrading*" in carrying on such trade, as these edicts leave open to us, let it be never so small, or so trifling; which however, it might be easily shewn, as it has been, that it is neither the one, nor the other. Sir, in this point of view, it is no more disgraceful for us to trade to Sweden, to China, to the North West coast, or to Spain and her dependencies, not one of which countries is now included in those edicts, than it is disgraceful for us to walk, because we are unable to fly; no more than it is shameful for man to use and enjoy the surface of this globe, because he has not, at his command, the whole circle of nature, and cannot range, at will, over all the glorious spheres, which constitute the universe.

The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. Campbell) called upon us just now, to tell him what was disgraceful submission, if carrying on commerce under these restrictions was not such submission. I will tell that gentleman. That submission is "*abject and disgraceful*," which yields to the decrees of frail and feeble power, as though they were irresistible—which takes council of fear, and weighs not our comparative force—which abandons the whole, at a summons to deliver up a part—which makes the will of others the measure of rights, which God and nature, not only have constituted eternal and unalienable, but have also endued us with ample means to maintain.

My argument, on this clause of the report of the committee, may be presented, in this form. Either the U. States have, or they have not, physical ability to carry on commerce, in defiance of the edicts of both, or of either of these nations. If we have not physical ability to carry on the trade, which they prohibit, then it is no disgrace to exercise that commerce, which these irresistible degrees permit. If we have such physical ability, then, to the degree, in which we abandon that commerce, which we have not power to carry on, is our submission "*abject and disgraceful*." It is yielding without struggle. It is sacrificing our rights, not because we have not force, but because we have not spirit, to maintain them. It is

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in this point of view, that I am disgusted with this report. It abjures, what it recommends. It declaims, in heroics, against submission, and proposes, in creeping prose, a tame and servile subserviency.

It cannot be concealed, let gentlemen try as much as they will, that we can trade, not only with one, but with both these belligerents, notwithstanding these restrictive decrees. The risk to G. Britain against French capture, scarcely amounts to two per cent. That to France against G. Britain is, unquestionably, much greater. But what is that to us? It is not our fault, if the power of Britain on the ocean is superior to that of Bonaparte. It is equal and exact justice, between both nations, for us to trade, with both, as far as it is in our power. Great as the power of Britain is, on the ocean, the enterprize and intrepidity of our merchants, are more than a match for it. They will get your products to the Continent, in spite of her navy. But suppose they do not? Suppose they fail, and are captured in the attempt? What is that to us? After we have given them full notice of all their dangers, and perfect warning, either of our inability, or of our determination not to protect them. If they take the risque, it is at their peril. And upon whom does the loss fall? As it does now, through the operation of your embargo, on the planter, on the farmer, on the mechanic, on the day laborer? No, sir. On the insurer, on the capitalist, on those, who in the full exercise of their intelligence, apprised of all circumstances, are willing to take the hazard, for the sake of the profit.

I will illustrate my general idea, by a supposition. There are two avenues to the ocean, from the harbour of New York; by the narrows and through Long Island Sound. Suppose the fleets, both of France and Great Britain, should block up the Narrows, so that to pass them, would be physically impossible, in the relative state of our naval force. Will gentlemen seriously contend that there would be any thing "*abject or disgraceful*" if the people of New York, should submit to carry on their trade through the Sound? Would the remedy, for this interference with our rights be abandoning the ocean altogether? Again. Suppose that instead of both nations blockading the same, each should station its force at a different one. France at the mouth of the Sound, Britain at the Narrows. In such case, would staying at home, and refusing any more to go upon the sea, be exercise of independence in the citizens of New-York? Great philosophers may call it "*dignified retirement*," if they will. I call it, and I am mistaken, if the people would not also call it, "*base and abject submission*." Sir. What, in such a case, would be true honour. Why. To consider well which adversary is weakest and cut our way to our rights, through the path, which he obstructs. Having removed the smaller impediment, we should return, with courage, strengthened by trial and animated by success, to the relief of our rights, from the pressure of the strongest assailant. But all this is war. And war is never to be incurred. If this be the national principle. Avow it. —Tell your merchants you will not protect them. But for heaven's sake

do not deny them the power of relieving their own and the nation's burdens, by the exercise of their own ingenuity. Sir. Impassable as the barriers, offered by these edicts are in the estimation of members on this floor, the merchants, abroad, do not estimate them as insurmountable.— Their anxiety to risque their property, in defiance of them is full evidence of this. The great danger to mercantile ingenuity is internal envy, the corrosion of weakness, or prejudice. Its external hazard is ever infinitely smaller. That practical intelligence, which this class of men possesses, beyond any other, in the community, excited by self interest, the strongest of human passions, is too elastic to be confined, by the limits of exterior human powers, however great or uncommon. Build a Chinese wall, the wit of your merchants, if permitted freely to operate, will break through it, or everleap it, or under-creep it.

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The second branch of the alternatives, under consideration, is equally deceptive. "*War with both nations.*" Can this ever be an alternative? Did you ever read in history, can you conceive in fancy, a war with two nations, each of whom is at war with the other, without an union with one, against the other, immediately resulting? It cannot exist in nature. The very idea is absurd. It never can be an alternative, whether we shall fight two nations, each hostile to the other. But it may be, and, if we are to fight at all, it is a very serious question, which of the two we are to select as an adversary. As to the third branch of these celebrated alternatives, "*a continuance and enforcement of the present system of commerce,*" I need not spend time to show that this does not include all the alternatives, which exist under this head. Since the committee immediately admit, that there does exist another alternative, "*partial repeal,*" about which they proceed to reason.

The report proceeds. "*The first*" (abject and degrading submission) "*cannot require any discussion.*" Certainly not. Submission of that quality, which the committee assume and with the epithets of which, they choose to invest it, can never require discussion at any time. But whether, trading under these orders and decrees, be such submission, whether we are not competent to resist them, in part, if not in whole, without a total abandonment of the exercise of all our maritime rights, the comparative effects of the edicts of each, upon our commerce, and the means we possess to influence or control either, are all fair and proper subjects of discussion. Some of which the committee have wholly neglected, and none of which have they examined, as the house had a right to expect.

The committee proceed, "*to dissipate the illusion,*" that there is any "*middle course,*" and to reassert the position before examined, that "*there is no other alternative then war with both nations, or a continuance of the present system.*"—This position they undertake to support by two assertions. First, that "*war with one of the belligerents only would be submission to the*

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edicts and will of the other." Second, that "*repeal, in whole or in part, of the embargo, must necessarily be war, or submission.*"

As to the first assertion, it is a miserable fallacy confounding coincidence of interest, with a subjection of will ; things, in their nature, palpably distinct. A man may do what another wills, nay, what he commands, and not act in submission to his will, or in obedience to his command.—Our interest, or duty may coincide with the line of conduct another presumes to prescribe. Shall we vindicate our independence, at the expence of our social or moral obligations ? I exemplify my idea, in this way. Two bullies beset your door, from which there are but two avenues.—One of them forbids you to go by the left, the other forbids you to go by the right avenue. Each is willing that you should pass by the way, which he permits. In such case, what will you do ? Will you keep house forever, rather than make choice of the path through which you will resume your external rights ? You cannot go both ways, at once, you must make your election. Yet, in making such election, you must, necessarily coincide with the wishes, and act according to the commands of one of the bullies. Yet who, before this committee, ever thought an election of one of two inevitable courses made under such circumstances, "*abject and degrading submission,*" to the will of either of the assailants. The second assertion, that "*repeal, in whole, or in part of the embargo must necessarily be war or submission,*" the committee proceed to maintain, by several subsidiary assertions. First—"A general repeal, without arming would be submission to both nations." So far from this being true, the reverse is the fact, it would be submission to neither. Great Britain does not say "you shall trade with me." France does not say "you shall trade with me." If this was the language of their edicts, there might be some cause for the assertion of the committee, if we trade with either, we submit. The edicts of each declare you shall not trade with my adversary. Our servile, knee crooking, embargo says "you shall, therefore, not trade." Can any submission be more palpable, more "*abject, more disgraceful !*" A general repeal without arming would be only an exercise of our natural rights, under the protection of our mercantile ingenuity, and not under that of physical power. Whether our merchants shall arm or not, is a question of political expediency, and of relative force. It may be very true, that we can fight our way to neither country, and yet it may be also very true, that we may carry on a very important commerce with both. The strength of the national arm may not be equal to contend with either, and yet the wit of our merchants may be an over match for the edicts of all. The question of arming or not arming, has reference only to the mode, in which we shall best enjoy our rights, and not at all to the quality of the act of trading, during these edicts. To exercise commerce is our absolute right. If we arm, we may possibly extend the field, beyond that which mere ingenuity, would open to us. Whether the extension, thus required, be worthy of the risque and expence is a fair question.—But decide it either way, how is trading as far as we have ability, made more abject, than not trading at all ?

I come to the second subsidiary assertion. "*A general repeal and arming of merchant vessels, would be war with both, and war of the worst kind, suffering the enemies to plunder us, without retaliation upon them.*"

I have before exposed the absurdity of a war with two belligerents, each hostile to the other. It cannot be true therefore, that "*a general repeal and arming our merchant vessels,*" would be such a war. Neither if war resulted, would it be "*war of the worst kind.*" In my humble apprehension, a war, in which our enemies are permitted to plunder us, and our merchants not permitted to defend their property, is somewhat worse than a war like this; in which, with arms in their hands, our brave seamen might sometimes prove too strong for their piratical assailants. By the whole amount of property, which we might be able to preserve, by these means would such a war be better than that in which we are now engaged. For the committee assure us [page 14] that the aggressions, to which we are subject, "*are to all intents and purposes, a maritime war, waged by both nations against the United States.*"

The last assertion of the committee, in this most masterly page is, that "*a partial repeal must, from the situation of Europe, necessarily be actual submission to one of the aggressors, and war with the other.*" In the name of common sense how can this be true? The trade to Sweden, to Spain, to China, are not now affected by the orders or decrees of either belligerent. How is it submission then, to these orders for us to trade to Gottenburgh, when neither France nor Britain command, nor prohibit it? Of what consequence is it to us, in what way the Gottenburgh merchant disposes of our products, after he has paid us our price? I am not about to deny, that a trade to Gottenburgh would defeat the purpose of coercing Great-Britain, through the want of our supplies. But I reason on the report upon its avowed principles. If gentlemen adhere to their system as a mean of coercion, let the administration avow it as such, and support the system, by arguments, such as their friends use every day on this floor. Let them avow as those friends do, that this is our mode of hostility against Great Britain. That it is better than "ball and gunpowder." Let them show that the means are adequate to the end; let them exhibit to us beyond the term of all this suffering, a happy salvation, and a glorious victory, and the people may then submit to it, even without murmur. But while administration support their system only as a municipal regulation, as a mean of safety and preservation, those, who canvass their principle are not called upon to contest with them on ground, which not only they do not take, but which officially they disavow. As partial repeal would not be submission to either; so also it would not be war with either. A trade to Sweden would not be war with Great Britain, that nation is her ally, and she permits it, nor with France, though Sweden is her enemy, she does not prohibit it. Ah! but say the committee [page 13] "*a measure which would supply exclusively, one of the belligerents, would be war with the other.*" This is the state secret; this is the master key to the whole policy. You must not only do what

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the letter of these orders prohibits, but you must not sin against the spirit of them. The great purpose is to prevent your products from getting to our enemy, and to effect this you must not only so act, as to obey the terms of the decrees, but keeping the great purpose of them always in sight, you must extend their construction to cases, which they cannot by any rule of reason be made to include.

Sir, I have done with this report. I would not have submitted to the task of canvassing it, if gentlemen had not thrown the gauntlet with the air of sturdy defiance. I willingly leave to this house and the nation, to decide whether the position I took in the commencement of my argument is not maintained; that there is not one of the principal positions, contained in this twelfth page, the heart of this report, which is true, in the sense and to the extent assumed by the committee.

It was under these general impressions that I used the word "*loathsome*," which has so often been repeated. Sir, it may not have been a well chosen word. It was that which happened to come to hand first. I meant to express my disgust, at what appeared to me a mass of bold assumptions, and of ill cemented sophisms.

I said, also, that "*the spirit, which it breathed, was disgraceful*." Sir, I meant no reflection upon the committee. Honest men and wise men may mistake the character of the spirit, which they recommend, or by which they are actuated. When called upon to reason, concerning that which by adoption, is to become identified with the national character, I am bound to speak of it as it appears to my vision. I may be mistaken. Yet I ask the question. Is not the spirit which it breathes disgraceful? Is it not disgraceful to abandon the exercise of all our commercial rights, because our rivals interfere with a part; not only to refrain from exercising that trade, which they prohibit, but for fear of giving offence, to decline that which they permit? Is it not disgraceful, after inflammatory recapitulation of insults, and plunderings and burnings, and confiscations, and murders, and actual war made upon us, to talk of nothing but alternatives, of general declarations, of still longer suspension of our rights and retreating farther out of "harm's way?" If this course be adopted by my country, I hope I am in error, concerning its real character. But to my sense, this whole report is nothing else than a recommendation to us of the abandonment of our essential rights, and apologies for doing it.

Before I sit down, I feel myself compelled to notice some observations, which have been made in different quarters of this house on the remarks, which at an early stage of this debate, I had the honour of submitting to its consideration. My honourable colleague (Mr. Bacon) was pleased to represent me as appealing to the people, over the heads of the whole government, against the authority of a law, which had not only the sanction of all the legislative branches of the government, but also of the judiciary. Sir, I made no such appeal. I did not so much as threaten it. I admitted expressly, the binding authority of the law.

But I claim a right which I ever will claim and ever will exercise, to urge, on this floor, my opinion of the unconstitutionality of a law, and my reasons for that opinion, as a valid ground for its repeal. Sir, I will not only do this, I will do more. If a law be, in my apprehension, dangerous in its principles, ruinous in its consequences, above all, if it be unconstitutional, I will not fail, in every fair and honourable way, to awaken the people to a sense of their peril, and to quicken them, by the exercise of their constitutional privileges, to vindicate themselves and posterity from ruin.

My honorable colleague (Mr. Bacon) was also pleased to refer to me *as a man of divisions and distinctions, waging war with adverbs and dealing in figures*. Sir, I am sorry that my honorable colleague should stoop "from his pride of place," at such humble game, as my poor style presents to him. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, I cannot but confess, that "deeming high," of this station, which I hold;—standing, as it were, in the awful presence of an assembled people, I am more than ordinarily anxious, on all occasions, to select the best thoughts, in my narrow storehouse, and to adapt to them, the most appropriate dress, in my intellectual wardrobe. I know not, whether, on this account, I am justly obnoxious to the asperity of my honorable colleague. But on the subject of figures, Mr. Speaker, this I know, and cannot refrain from assuring this house, that as, on the one hand, I shall, to the extent of my humble talents, always be ambitious, and never cease striving, to make a decent figure on this floor, so on the other, I never can be ambitious, but on the contrary, shall ever strive, chiefly, to avoid, cutting a figure like, my honorable colleague.

The gentleman from Georgia, (Mr. Troup,) the other day, told this house, that if commerce were permitted, such was the state of our foreign relations, none but bankrupts would carry on trade—Sir, the honorable gentleman has not attained correct information, in this particular. I do not believe that I state any thing above the real fact, when I say, that on the day this legislature assembled, one hundred vessels, at least, were lying in the different ports and harbours of New-England, loaded, riding at single anchor, ready and anxious for nothing so much, as for your leave to depart. Certainly, this does not look much like any doubt, that a field of advantageous commerce would open, if you would unbar the door, to our citizens. That this was the case, in Massachusetts, I know. Before I left that part of the country, I had several applications, from men, who stated that they had property in such situations, and soliciting me to give them the earliest information of your probable policy. The men so applying, Sir, I can assure the house, were not bankrupts; but intelligent merchants, shrewd to perceive their true interests; keen to pursue them. The same honourable gentleman was also pleased to speak of "*a paltry trade in potash and codfish*," and to refer to me, as the representative of men, who raised "*beef and pork, and butter and cheese, and potatoes and cabbages*." Well, Sir, I confess the fact. I am the representative, in part, of men, the

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products of whose industry are beef and pork, and butter and cheese, and potatoes and cabbages. And let me tell that honourable gentleman, that I would not yield the honour of representing such men to be the representative of all the growers of cotton, and rice, and tobacco, and indigo, in the whole world. Sir, the men, whom I represent, not only raise these humble articles, *but they do it with the labour of their own hands, with the sweat of their own brows.* And by this, their habitual mode of hardy industry, they acquire a vigour of nerve, a strength of muscle, and a spirit and intelligence somewhat characteristic. And let me assure that honourable gentleman, that the men of whom I speak, will not, at his call, nor at the invitation of any set of men, from his quarter of the union, undertake to "*drive one another into the ocean.*" But, on the contrary, whenever they once realise, that their rights are invaded, they will unite, like a band of brothers, and drive their enemies there.

The honourable gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. Johnson,) speaking of the embargo, said, that this was the kind of conflict, which our fathers waged; and my honourable colleague (Mr. Bacon) made a poor attempt to confound this policy, with the non-intercourse and non-importation agreement of 1774 and 1775. Sir, nothing can be more dissimilar. The non-intercourse and non-importation agreement of that period, so far from destroying commerce, fostered and encouraged it. The trade with Great-Britain, was indeed, voluntarily obstructed, but the enterprize of our merchants found a new incentive in the commerce with all the other nations of the globe, which succeeded immediately on our escape from the monopoly of the mother country. Our navigation was never suspended. The field of commerce, at that period, so far from being blasted by pestiferous regulations, was extended by the effect of the restrictions adopted.

But, let us grant all they assert. Admit, for the sake of argument, that the embargo, which restrains us now from communication with all the world, is precisely synonymous with that non-intercourse and non-importation which restrained us, then, from Great-Britain. Suppose the war, which we now wage with that nation, is in every respect the same, as that, which our fathers waged with her in 1774 and 1775. Have we, from the effects of their trial, any lively hope of success, in our present attempt? Did our fathers either effect a change in her injurious policy, or prevent a war, by non-importation and non-intercourse? Sir, they did neither the one nor the other. Her policy was never changed, until she had been beaten on our soil, in an eight year's war. Our fathers never relied upon non-intercourse and non-importation, as measures of hostile coercion. They placed their dependence upon them, solely, as means of pacific influence among the people of that nation. The relation, in which this country stood, at that time, with regard to Great-Britain, gave a weight and a potency to these measures, then, which in our present relation to her, we can neither hope, nor imagine possible. At that period we were her colonies, a part of her family. Our prosperity was essentially hers. So it was avowed, in this country—So it was admitted, in Great

Britain. Every refusal of intercourse, which had a tendency to show the importance of these, then, colonies to the parent country, of the part, to the whole, was a natural and a wise means of giving weight to our remonstrances. We pretended not to controul, but to influence, by making her feel our importance. In this attempt, we excited no national pride, on the other side of the Atlantic. Our success was no national degradation, for the more we developed our resources and relative weight, the more we discovered the strength and resources of the British power. We were, then, component parts of it. All the measures of the colonies, antecedent to the declaration of independence, had this principle for its basis. As such, non-importation and non-intercourse were adopted, in this country. As such, they met the co-operation of the patriots of Great Britain, who deemed themselves deviating from none of their national duties, when they avowed themselves the allies of American patriots, to drive through the influence of the loss of our trade, the ministry from their places, or their measures. Those patriots did co-operate with our fathers, and that openly, in exciting discontent, under the effect of our non-intercourse agreements. In so doing, they failed in none of their obligations to their sovereign. In no nation, can it ever be a failure of duty to maintain, that the safety of the whole depends on preserving its due weight, to every part. Yet, notwithstanding, the natural and little suspicious use of these instruments of influence, notwithstanding the zeal of the American people coincided, with the views of the Congress, and a mighty party existed in Great Britain openly leagued, with our fathers, to give weight and effect to their measures, they did not effect the purposes, for which they were put into operation. The British policy was not abandoned. War was not prevented. How, then, can any encouragement be drawn, from that precedent, to support us under the privations of the present system of commercial suspension? Can any nation admit that the trade of another is so important to her welfare, as that, on its being withdrawn, any obnoxious policy must be abandoned, without at the same time admitting that she is no longer independent? Sir, I could indeed wish that it were in our power, to regulate, not only Great Britain, but the whole world, by opening or closing our ports. It would be a glorious thing for our country to possess such a mighty weapon of offence. But, acting in a public capacity, with the high responsibilities, resulting from the great interests, dependant upon my decision, I cannot yield to the wishes of love sick patriots, or the visions of teeming enthusiasts. I must see the adequacy of means to their ends. I must see, not merely that it is very desirable that Great Britain should be brought to our feet, by this embargo, but that there is some likelihood of such a consequence, to the measure, before I can concur, in that universal distress and ruin, which, if much longer continued, will inevitably result from it. Since, then, every dictate of sense and reflection convinces me of the utter futility of this system, as a mean of coercion, on Great Britain, I shall not hesitate to urge its abandonment. No, Sir, not even, although like others, I should be assailed, by all the terrors of the outcry of British influence.

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Really, Mr. Speaker, I know not how to express the shame and disgust, with which I am filled, when I hear language of this kind cast out upon this floor, and thrown in the faces of men, standing, justly, at no mean height, in the confidence of their countrymen. Sir, I did, indeed, know that such vulgar aspersions were circulating among the lower passions of our nature. I knew that such vile substances were ever tempering between the paws of some printer's devil. I knew that foul exhalations, like these, daily rose, in our cities, and crept along the ground, just as high as the spirits of lampblack and saline oil could elevate; falling, soon, by native baseness, into oblivion, in the jakes. I knew, too, that this species of party insinuation, was a mighty engine, in this quarter of the country, on an election day, played off, from the top of a stump, or the top of a hogshead, while the gin circulated, while barbecue was roasting; in those happy, fraternal, associations and consociations when those who speak, utter without responsibility, and those, who listen, hear without scrutiny. But little did I think, that such odious shapes would dare to obtrude themselves, on this national floor, among honourable men; the select representatives, the confidential agents, of a wise, a thoughtful, and a virtuous people. I want language to express my contempt and indignation, at the sight.

So far as respects the attempt, which has been made to cast such aspersion on that part of the country which I have the honour to represent, I beg this honorable house to understand, that so long as they, who circulate such insinuations, deal only in generals and touch not particulars, they may gam, among the ignorant and the stupid, a vacant and a staring audience. But when once these suggestions are brought to bear, upon those individuals, who, in New England, have, naturally, the confidence of their countrymen, there is no power in these calumnies. The men, who now lead the influences of that country, and in whose councils, the people, on the day, when the tempest shall come, will seek refuge, are men, whose stake is in the soil, whose interests are identified, with those of the mass of their brethren, whose private lives and public sacrifices present a never failing antidote to the poison of malicious invectives. On such men, Sir, party spirit may, indeed, cast its odious filth, but there is a polish, in their virtues, to which no such slime can adhere. They are owners of the soil; real yeomanry; many, of them men, who led in the councils of our country, in the dark day, which preceded national independence; many of them, men, who, like my honourable friend, from Connecticut, on my left, (Col. Talmage) stood foremost, on the perilous edge of battle; making their breasts, in the day of danger, a bulwark for their country.

True it is, Mr. Speaker, there is another, and a much more numerous class, composed of such, as, through defect of age, can claim no share in the glories of our revolution; such, as have not yet been blest with the happy opportunity of "playing the man" for their country;—Generous sons of illustrious sires;—Men, not to be deterred, from fulfilling the high obligations they owe to this people, by the sight of these foul and offensive weapons. Men, who, with little experience of their own to boast, will fly to the tombs of their fathers, and questioning, concerning

their duties, the spirit, which hovers there, will no more shrink from maintaining their native rights, through fear of the sharpness of malevolent tongues, than they will, if put to the trial, shrink from defending them, through fear of the sharpness of their enemies' swords.

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